



PUSSEY'S®



BLACK TOT DAY MARKS THE PASSING OF THE ROYAL NAVY'S OLDEST TRADITION

Portsmouth, July 30, 2010 – The 40th anniversary of the ending of the rum tot, once the Royal Navy's oldest tradition, is commemorated today with a re-enactment of Up Spirits on the quayside next to HMS Victory.

Forever known as Black Tot Day, the final Up Spirits took place between 11am and 12 noon on July 31, 1970 when the last measure of Pussey's rum was served to the crews of Royal Navy ships.

It ended an enshrined 300 year tradition in which the daily rum measure shrank from half a pint a day from its introduction in the 17th century (the standard measure right up to the latter part of the 19th century), to one eighth of a pint (equivalent to three measures) of 54.5% ABV Caribbean rum. The rum was watered down in the Scuttlebutt and either drunk on the spot or collected in a rum fanny for the sailors' mess. (*See Guide to rum lingo below*)

The Pussey's rum re-enactment crew, dressed in naval gear of Nelson's period, will be accompanied by the Exmouth Shanty Men singing famous old sea songs such as 'All for me Grog' and 'Nelson's Blood'.

The songs recall the creation of grog (a mix of rum, lime juice and sugar) and the death of Nelson whose body was shipped back to England in a rum cask to preserve it after the battle of Trafalgar. Legend says that the barrel was dry when opened. Thirsty sailors had bored a hole and, literally, drunk Nelson's blood.

But while the tradition has gone, Pussey's Rum survives. In 1980 the Admiralty gave the exclusive right to the Royal Navy's rum recipe to Charles Tobias, a deep-sea sailor living on the island of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

(more)

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In recognition Charles Tobias makes an annual donation to Naval charities to provide amenities for men and women of the Royal Navy and former sailors. To date, the donations exceed £1 million.

Pusser's Rum is the authentic rum as issued for over three hundred years at the same strength of 54.5% ABV and is in worldwide distribution.

The re-enactment takes place at 12.30pm on 30 July, the first day of three Navy Days in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Guide to rum lingo:

- Pusser - sailor's name for the Purser, or Supply Officer
- Up Spirits - the call to the rum issue
- Scuttlebutt - water butt for mixing the diluted rum; now means 'gossip'
- Rum fanny - can in which sailors collected their mess rum ration
- Grog - named after Admiral Vernon who was known to his men as 'old grog'. He ordered rum to be watered and limes and sugar to be issued as a reward for a job well done.

For information on stockists contact the UK distributor, Cellar Trends, on 01283 217703, or e-mail: sales@cellartrends.co.uk or see the Cellar Trends website: www.cellartrends.co.uk

For further information and pictures of the Pusser's rum Up Spirits re-enactment contact:

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